

circumferential surface. Only narrow strip-shaped portions of the circumferential surface are pressed so as to form, in cross-section, a central fibre core of high compression and buckling strength and longitudinal ribs of softer fibre structure and with a coarser capillary structure extending radially outward from the fibre core. Methods of forming these tampons and apparatus for forming these tampons are also disclosed.

The patent cited in the specification is enclosed herewith, along with a Form PTO-1449 listing this patent.

As suggested by the Office Action, references to STANDARD OB® have been corrected. Also, revised Figures 8 and 5-6 are submitted herewith. Approval is requested.

All of the multiple dependencies in the pending claims have been deleted. Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, fourth paragraph is therefore respectfully requested.

The specification has been objected to under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as not providing a description of the subject matter of claim 10. This reason for rejection is respectfully traversed. As attached, Figs. 5 and 7 have been revised to illustrate that the angle α designates the angle between the press cutters 27 and pressing faces 28. Moreover, as stated on page 8, at lines 15-18, these cutters 27 are disposed on press segments 22 and sliding plates 24 "at equal angular

distances." Withdrawal of this reason for rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 5/1-3, 9/1-3, 10-19/9/1-3 and 10-19/9/5/1-3 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite. This reason for rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicants have reviewed the rejected claims and the other pending claims and have amended the claims as appropriate to properly define the present invention. Withdrawal of this reason for rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by either Wolff et al. or Friese. This reason for rejection is respectfully traversed.

Friese discloses circular tampons pressed from an elongated blank, as shown in Figs. 3-4. This reference does not disclose "a preform which comprises an approximately circular fibre core...and longitudinal ribs...which extend radially outwardly from the fibre core..." as recited by amended Claim 1. Friese only discloses even circumferential pressure to make a circular, compressed core, and therefore does not anticipate claim 1, as amended.

Wolff et al. disclose a method for manufacturing tampons whereby an uncompressed blank is first compressed into a "four-pointed star" shape by four jaws 12. This intermediate shape is then further compressed by four quarter-circular jaws 13

into a cylindrical shape. Although it is respectfully submitted that it would be improper to interpret the intermediate star-shaped "semi-finished tampon 16" shown in Fig. 2 of Wolff et al. as being relevant to the claimed invention, even under such a strained interpretation, the present invention is not anticipated. Claim 1 clearly recites that the compressed portions are "narrow strip-shaped portions of the circumferential surface" and this element is clearly absent from Wolff et al. When the term "narrow strip-shaped" is interpreted in view of the specification and drawings, it is clear that the broad indentations formed in Fig. 2 of Wolff et al. are simply not the same structure. Moreover, Wolff et al. simply does not disclose a *finished* tampon that exhibits all the structural elements recited by Claim 1. For these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 1 is not anticipated.

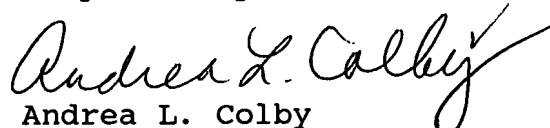
Additionally, neither Friese, Wolff et al. nor any other reference of record disclose or suggest, in any combination, the features of the present invention. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that in view of the scope and content of the prior art, the level of skill in the art, and the differences between the present invention and the prior art that were noted above, the present invention would not have been obvious.

The Office Action indicates that claims 2-19 "appear to overcome the prior art." Applicants gratefully acknowledge this indication of allowable subject matter and submit that in view of the amendments overcoming the §112 rejections and the remarks set forth above, Claims 2-19 are now in a condition to be allowed.

Claim 20 is added by the amendments set forth above. In view of the Remarks set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that this claim also defines the present invention over the prior art of record.

For all these reasons, reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. An early Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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